

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

MID-PACIFIC REGION

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**ADOBE RANCH TEMPORARY ADDITIONAL POINT OF DELIVERY AND TEMPORARY
RIGHT-OF-WAY ACCESS AT MILEPOST 17.28 ON THE MADERA CANAL**

DRAFT FONSI-08-95

Recommended by:

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DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Adobe Ranch Temporary Additional Point of Delivery and Temporary Right-of-Way Access at
Milepost 17.28 on the Madera Canal

In accordance with the National Environment Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the approval of a temporary right-of-way access permit and temporary additional point of delivery of up to 200 acre-feet (AF) of Smith Adobe Ranch Family Partnership's (Adobe Ranch) 300 AF/year (AFY) substitute water supply for the purpose of livestock watering. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA) Number 08-95, *Adobe Ranch Temporary Additional Point of Delivery at Milepost 17.28 on the Madera Canal*, dated August 2009, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

Adobe Ranch has a contract (contract number 14-06-200-6523) dated July 8, 1957 with the Bureau Reclamation (Reclamation) for up to 300 AFY of a "Substitute Water Supply" for irrigation purposes to be delivered at Dike 3 (Milepost [MP] 20.57) off of the Madera Equalization Reservoir (Reservoir). The existing contract allows up to 300 AFY water supply to be beneficially used for watering livestock and for the Adobe Ranch's land. The United States is responsible for delivering annually to Adobe Ranch, without cost to Adobe Ranch, and at such times as Adobe Ranch shall order, not to exceed 300 AFY of water at Dike number 3 in section 18, Township 10 south, Range 19 east, MDB&M; provided that the United States shall be obligated to deliver water only at such times as water is available in the Reservoir as required for deliveries to other users and when the water level in Reservoir is above the turnout at Dike number 3. The source of the water from the Reservoir is Millerton Lake.

The area covered by the current contract goes from the Reservoir to approximately 2.5 miles south and includes approximately 700 acres of non-irrigated pasture owned by Adobe Ranch. The water from the Reservoir is released at Dike number 3 into a natural channel and travels approximately 1.5 miles south to a diked pond. The water delivered to Adobe Ranch is currently used for livestock watering.

Reclamation received a request, in July 2009 from Adobe Ranch, to approve a temporary additional point of delivery for delivery of up to 200 AF of their 300 AF substitute water supply for irrigation of livestock kept on lands to the west of the currently irrigated pastures (see Figure 1). This action was done in 1990, 1991, and 1992 during drought conditions. Adobe Ranch is also pursuing a separate long-term action which is not covered under this EA and would require additional environmental analysis.

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

FINDINGS

Water Resources

Under the Proposed Action, up to 200 AF of water will be pumped from the Madera Canal to be delivered to the concrete inlet siphon on the north side of the dirt O&M road. Water will flow under the Madera Canal to be released at the outlet siphon on the south side of the canal into a natural watercourse to be delivered to two ponds south of the canal on Adobe Ranch lands to be used for livestock watering. This water is part of Adobe Ranch's 300 AF contract allocation and will not affect Reclamation's ability to deliver water to other customers. Groundwater will not be pumped as a result of the Proposed Action. Water delivered for livestock watering may also contribute a small amount to groundwater recharge as there is always some seepage into the ground from natural courses. There will be no adverse impacts to water resources as a result of the Proposed Action.

Air Quality

Under the Proposed Action, up to 200 AF of water will be pumped from the Madera Canal via an 80 horsepower Teir II diesel tractor-mounted pump to be delivered to the concrete inlet siphon on the north side of the dirt operation and maintenance road. Water will flow under the Madera Canal to be released at the outlet siphon on the south side of the canal into a natural watercourse to be delivered to two ponds south of the canal on Adobe Ranch lands to be used for livestock watering. Air quality emissions for the Proposed Action are well below the de minimus thresholds for the SJVAPCD; therefore, there are no air quality impacts associated with this project.

Biological Resources

Under the Proposed Action, some minor disturbance will occur in a mostly disturbed area. The only species at issue will be the raptors utilizing the nearby nest that Halstead & Associates found (likely a pair of Red-tailed Hawks). To protect these hawks, the work will be done outside of the nesting season (the non-nesting period is September through February). A follow-up survey by a qualified biologist is planned, to ensure that no effects have occurred on any riparian or wetland habitat. Work will be confined to a flagged area, to protect adjacent wetlands. As long as the work is confined to the area necessary for the installation of the pipes and trailer-mounted pump, no such impacts are expected.

Critical habitat for the vernal pool fairy shrimp, hairy Orcutt grass, San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass, and succulent owl's-clover are all present. However, no vernal pools or the watersheds of vernal pools will actually be affected by the Proposed Action, because the work will be confined to a small, already-disturbed area, which itself does not contain any vernal pools, nor is it near any. Only perennial wetlands are nearby.

Cultural Resources

Under the proposed action alternative, Reclamation will permit 200 AF of water to be pumped out of the Madera Canal utilizing a mobile pump located adjacent an existing maintenance road near the Madera Canal. The water will be pumped into an existing waterway which will provide water downstream to existing stock ponds. A small trench through an existing maintenance road will be excavated to install the PVC pipe and allow maintenance vehicles ability to pass over the pipe. All excavation will occur within disturbed contexts of the existing maintenance road. The proposed action has no potential to affect historic properties pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1). The proposed action will have no impact to cultural resources as a result.

Indian Trust Assets

There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the water involved with this action, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water proposed in this action. The Proposed Action does not affect ITAs, the nearest ITA is a PDA, approximately 13 miles northeast from the Proposed Action area.

Socioeconomic Resources

Under the Proposed Action, water will be delivered at MP 17.28 for watering additional head of cattle. There will be a beneficial impact to Adobe Ranch's socioeconomic resources, but no overall impact to socioeconomic resources within the county.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action will not cause dislocation, changes in employment, or increase flood, drought, or disease. The Proposed Action will not disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged or minority populations.

Land Use

The Proposed Action will include the delivery of CVP water at a temporary additional point of delivery for livestock watering. The Proposed Action area is already used for livestock watering and will not include changes in land use; therefore there are no impacts to land used associated with the Proposed Action.

Global Climate Change

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated during construction of the Proposed Action will predominantly be in the form of carbon dioxide (CO₂). In comparison to criteria air pollutants, such as ozone and particulate matter up to 10 microns in diameter, CO₂ and other GHG emissions persist in the atmosphere for a much longer period of time. While any increase in GHG emissions will add to the global inventory of gases that will contribute to global climate change, the Proposed Action will result in only very slight increases in GHG emissions from temporary or existing sources. The Proposed Action's contribution to a net increase in GHG emissions will be less than considerable.

Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Action, when added to other actions, will not contribute to significant increases or decreases in environmental conditions. The delivery of water at MP 17.28 on the Madera Canal will be temporary lasting only through September 2009. The Proposed Action was found to have no adverse impact on water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, ITAs, air quality, global climate change, socioeconomics, environmental justice, and land use and therefore there is no contribution to cumulative impacts on these resources areas.